

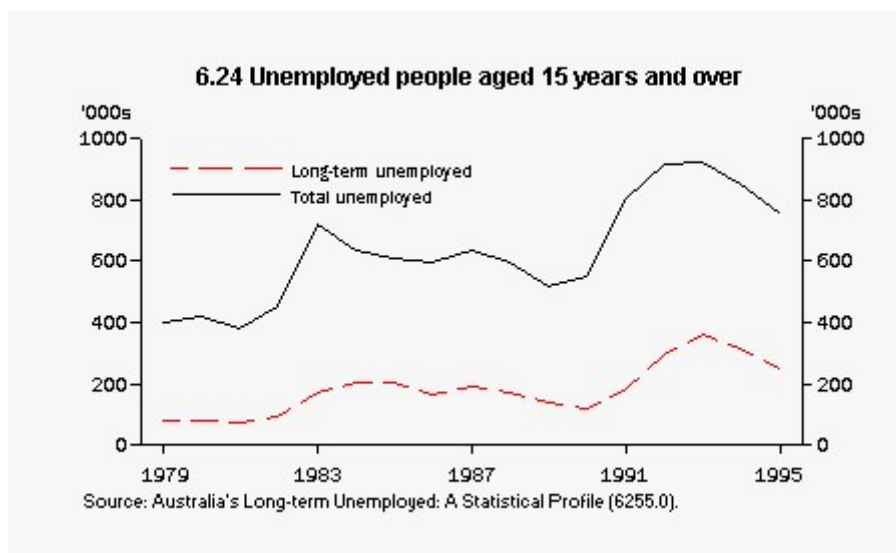
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THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

In May 1995, there were 246,400 long-term unemployed persons in Australia. The long-term unemployed are those who have been unemployed for 52 weeks or more. This was significantly below the peak level of 366,000 persons reached in March 1993, but was still above the pre-1990-91 recession levels. The long-term unemployed represented 32.7% of all unemployed persons, and 2.7% of the labour force.

There were a further 398,400 family members living in the same households as the long-term unemployed. Of these, 188,100 were dependent children.



Of the long-term unemployed in May 1995, 67% were male, which exceeded their labour force share of 57.1%. Long-term unemployment rates for males were higher than for females across all age groups, except for those aged 15 to 19 years. While younger males had high long-term unemployment rates, the rates were highest for older males. More than half of unemployed males aged 45 years and over, were long-term unemployed.

The average duration of unemployment (i.e. the average length of the current spell of unemployment for all unemployed persons within a particular group) tended to increase with age for both males and females. In May 1995, the average duration of unemployment for long-term unemployed males was shorter than for females across most age groups. However, the average duration of unemployment for all long-term unemployed males (142.5 weeks) was longer than that for all long-term unemployed females (133.4 weeks). This reflects the high concentration of long-term unemployed males in older age groups, which have relatively higher average duration of unemployment.

Evidence suggests that there is a relationship between the unemployment and long-term

unemployment experience of one family member and the labour market experience of other family members. In May 1995, of the 102,300 married couple families that had at least one partner long-term unemployed, only 31,900 (31.2%) had a partner in employment. Furthermore, there were 7,500 married couple families in which both partners were long-term unemployed. These married couple families tend to be more isolated from the work force and may have fewer informal contacts to assist in their search for employment.

**6.25 Long-term unemployed married couple families number and rates,-
husbands and wives aged 15 years and over, May 1995**

Labour force status of partner	Husband		Wife	
	No. (‘000)	Rate (%)	No. (‘000)	Rate (%)
Employed	16.2	0.8	15.7	0.8
Short-term unemployed	3.5	5.1	5.2	10.1
Long-term unemployed	7.5	26.3	7.5	27.4
Not in the labour force	50.9	5.3	3.4	3.1
Total	78.1	2.5	31.7	1.4

Source: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia (6224.0).

Sole parents also experience higher rates of long-term unemployment. In May 1995, the long-term unemployment rate for female sole parents (5.4%) was considerably higher than that for wives with dependants (1.5%). In addition, since the height of the 1990-91 recession, the long-term unemployment rate for female sole parents has fallen at a slower rate than that for wives with dependants.

The birthplace of migrants is another factor which can influence a person's labour force experience. In May 1995, migrants from other than main English-speaking background countries experienced a higher long-term unemployment rate than either people born in Australia or migrants from main English-speaking background countries.

**6.26 Unemployment and long-term unemployment rates for persons aged 15
years and over - birthplace, May 1995**

Unemployment rate, by birthplace, May 1995		
(%)		
Birthplace	Unemployment rate	Long-term unemployment rate
Australia	7.9	2.3
Main English-speaking background countries(a)	7.4	2.2
Non-English-speaking background countries	12.0	5.6
Total	8.4	2.7

(a) Comprises the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, South Africa, United States of America and New Zealand.

Source: The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0).

For migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, long-term unemployment rates decreased as their length of residence increased. Those who had recently arrived in Australia experienced a long-term unemployment rate of 10.7% in May 1995. This compares to 3.7% for migrants who arrived prior to 1971.

In February 1994, long-term unemployment rates were significantly higher among people without post-school qualifications. Those who had not completed the highest level of secondary school had the highest long-term unemployment rate (6.8%).

6.27 Unemployment and long-term unemployment rates for persons aged 15 to 19 - educational attainment, February 1994

(%)		
Educational attainment	Unemployment rate	Long-term unemployment rate
Males		
With post-school qualifications	7.6	2.7
Without post-school qualifications	15.4	6.7
Total(a)	11.7	4.7
Females		
With post-school qualifications	7.6	2.1
Without post-school qualifications	13.5	4.7
Total(a)	11.2	3.5
Persons		
With post-school qualifications	7.6	2.5
Without post-school qualifications	14.6	5.8
Total(a)	11.5	4.2

(a) Includes persons still at school.

Source: Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment, Australia (6235.0).

Over the last decade, the proportion of the long-term unemployed with post-school qualifications increased from 21.1% to 27.6%. This increase coincided with an increase in the proportion of the labour force with post-school qualifications. However, the increase in the proportion of long-term unemployed people with post-school qualifications has been much greater, primarily since the onset of the 1990-91 recession.

There is significant variation in the long-term unemployment rates between the various States and Regions in Australia. In May 1995, Tasmania (3.6%), South Australia (3.5%) and Victoria (3.3%), had the highest long-term unemployment rates, well above the national average of 2.7%. For Tasmania and Victoria, these high long-term unemployment rates were reflected in Hobart (3.6%) and Melbourne (3.3%), as well as throughout the remainder of these States. While Adelaide had a long-term unemployment rate of 3.9%, the rest of South Australia experienced a rate less than the national average.

The highest regional long-term unemployment rates were experienced in the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, as well as along the coastal areas of south-east Queensland and southern New South Wales.

A more detailed analysis of long-term unemployment can be found in Australia's Long-term Unemployed: A Statistical Profile (6255.0).

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